

## USING VIDEO IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY

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There is no denying the fact that video is an effective tool in foreign language teaching. Firstly, it stimulates students' interest in language learning by appealing to several senses, sight and hearing in particular, simultaneously. Secondly, it develops students' listening skills and expands their vocabulary. Finally, it provides access to culture.

In this paper we aim to show how the National Geographic documentary *Megacities: London* can be used in teaching the topic *On the Move* to university students in the course in Oral and Written English. This video examines London's infrastructure covering different kinds of city traffic (air, road and river). It can be shown at the revision stage when students are already familiar with the vocabulary for traffic and public transport, which can contribute to students' comprehension of the documentary and revision of the vocabulary.

The video *Megacities: London* is easily broken down into four sections each dealing with a certain kind of traffic in London: Section I. Air traffic in London. Section II. Road and Street Traffic in London. Section III. Thames Traffic. Section IV. Terminal 5. We worked out a set of tasks and activities on each section following the classic model of viewing activities that involves pre-viewing, while-viewing and post-viewing tasks. Sections I, III, and IV are of equal length and it takes one 80-minute period to complete each of them. It takes two 80-minute periods to complete Section II.

The pre-viewing activities are mainly of introductory and anticipatory character: they introduce the topic and issues the section deals with and make students anticipate what they are going to see. We suggest questions as the main type of pre-viewing activities. The pre-viewing questions in Section I deal both with the documentary as a whole and with air traffic as the subject of the section. They are as follows:

- *The programme you are going to watch is called "Megacities. London". What city do you think is qualified as a megacity?*
- *What problems in relation to traffic do you think a megacity like London may face? How do you think these problems are solved? How is traffic controlled in megacities?*
- *What airports are there in the London area? Which is the busiest one? List problems it may experience.*
- *Taking into account the great number of planes crisscrossing the skies at busy airports at the same time, how do you think they keep from colliding?*

The pre-viewing activities can also be based on reading tasks set and done as homework before the video lesson. In Sections II, for instance, we ask students to

read the texts “On the road”, “Public transport in towns and cities” in the book *Britain. The Country and Its People* by James O’Driscoll [2] and the text “Greater London” in the book *Britain in Close-up* by David McDowall [1] in order to obtain the background information on the transport system in Britain in general and in London in particular. The task students do at home is to make notes under the following headings: a) British people’s attitude to the car and factors defining it; b) problems caused by traffic; c) communication system in Greater London and its attendant problems; d) the British government’s transport policy.

The while-viewing activities of each section comprise the first viewing and comprehension activities. The former involve questions designed to check general comprehension of the section whereas the latter are aimed at detailed comprehension of the section. First students read the first viewing questions, then watch the whole section and answer them in pairs or as a class.

The comprehension tasks further break down the section into a number of successive episodes (clips). Each episode is usually shown separately twice. First students read the task, then watch the episode at the first show and finally do the task at the second show. Comprehension activities can vary greatly. They involve multiple-choice questions, gap-fillings tasks, sentence completion, true/false statements, finding and correcting mistakes, matching tasks, defining what figures (numbers, symbols) refer to. In gap-fillings tasks you may need to pause after each sentence with missing words if necessary. Sentence completion tasks that are not intended to reproduce exactly what you hear in the video can give some key words as clues in brackets to help students summarize this information, for instance:

*Complete these sentences using the clues in brackets:*

1. COMIT has a ..... (to screen, a scanner).
2. The monitor gives us ..... (congestion, warning).
3. COMIT offers a ..... (to see, a megacity).

Matching tasks can involve matching the beginnings of the sentences taken from the episode to their endings and the so-called three-way matching tasks when you should match 3 items with the information relevant to them, for instance:

1. *Decide which sentences describe the traditional sonar (T), which the most advanced, next generation sonar (A) and which both (B):*

*It measures depths.*

*It bounces narrow sound waves of the riverbed back to the ship.*

*It has a multi-beam swath system. ...*

2. *Here are some reasons why Terminal 5 at Heathrow is needed. Watch Section 4 of the programme and then note who said what: Mike Forester (MF), Mike Davies (MD), Adrian Dollen (AD):*

*Terminal 5 is going to be a gateway to London.*

*Terminal 5 is going to be a gateway to the UK.*

*We have an opportunity to build a new airport effectively in one go. ...*

Special attention should be paid to the vocabulary exercises, which are usually combined with comprehension tasks. They can precede comprehension tasks to contribute to comprehension by introducing words and expressions that the students

may not be familiar with. The most common exercise in this case is matching words with their definitions before watching the episode containing them. Vocabulary exercises that follow comprehension tasks can involve finding words or expressions in the preceding exercise, using their definitions/explanations or synonyms. Alternatively, students read the definitions of the words that are used in the extract, and then they try to hear and note them down while watching/listening to it. The teacher can ask the students to guess what words may have the given meanings before showing the episode. Another kind of vocabulary exercise is first matching the words to their definitions, then using them to fill in the gaps in the extract before watching it, and finally watching the extract and checking.

After completing the comprehension or vocabulary task students can compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

The post-viewing, or follow-up, activities involve discussion, in which students share their impressions of and views on what they have heard and seen and compare the different aspects of London's infrastructure and traffic control with those in Kyiv, Kharkiv or other Ukrainian cities. Follow-up activities can also involve writing. For instance, in Section III we offer this writing task as a follow-up activity: *Write an article about the traffic surveillance system in London to appear in a British newspaper using what you have found out from the documentary. Try to impress your reader highlighting the advantages of this system.*

To sum up, elaborately designed video courses can develop students' linguistic and cultural competence and should be intensively used in foreign language teaching.

#### **References**

1. McDowall, David. Britain in Close-up. An In-depth Study of Contemporary Britain. – Longman, 2008. – 210 p.
2. O'Driscoll, James. Britain. The Country and Its People: An Introduction for Learners of English. – Oxford University Press, 2005. – 224 p.

### **TEACHING ENGLISH AS A LIFE SKILL**

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As modern foreign language teachers, we hear more and more that a modern course concept needs to simultaneously target our modern learners' language needs and provide a range of professional, academic, social and personal skills that learners will need in order to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It could be an opportunity to enhance the value of English teaching. As people gradually realized the inadequacy of traditional teaching approaches, such as audiolingualism and grammar-translation, in preparing students for engagement in social interaction, cries for a teaching approach that addresses students' ability to produce the right thing at the right time echoed in the countries, where English is taught as a foreign language, and these cries precipitated communicative language teaching.